

# **Ten Ideas: Social Studies in the Summer!**

## **Interactive Learning in Connecticut**

*Below are ten family field trip ideas to extend and enrich our Grade 5 Social Studies curriculum on geography and the history of the U.S. Visiting museums and historic sites is a great way to enjoy learning beyond the boundaries of a classroom. The places I list below, many of which cater to student interests I heard expressed throughout the year, are all in Connecticut. Many are free of charge.*

1) **Connecticut State Parks:**

[http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2716&q=325086&deepNav\\_GID=1650](http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2716&q=325086&deepNav_GID=1650)

The “test” for our unit on Geographic Literacy required students to make a map of a Connecticut State Park. What better use of a beautiful day than a walk or picnic in the park your child studied? Students may enjoy identifying and categorizing the different landforms and waterforms we’ve studied throughout the year.

2) **Slater Museum:** 108 Crescent Street, Norwich, [www.slatermuseum.org](http://www.slatermuseum.org)

The Slater Museum is architectural eye candy and features many sculptures and works of art from around the world (a great preview for our study of world history in Grades 6 and 7)! A special summer exhibit, Meadow Life, will showcase landscapes of Connecticut. We learned about landscape painting as a folk art tradition in our Midwest Unit, and many students produced their own landscape drawings for our Folk Art Fair.

3) **Mark Twain House & Museum:** 351 Farmington Avenue, Hartford.

[www.marktwainhouse.org](http://www.marktwainhouse.org)

The intricate Victorian design of literary giant Mark Twain’s house is engaging in and of itself- no need to have read his works. New “living history” tours, led by a costumed servant or family member, are perfect for a middle school audience. We learned about the historical importance Mississippi River steamboats this year. Students also read at least one Twain novel in Grade 8.

4) **John Meyer fashion exhibit at Mandell Jewish Community Center:** 355

Bloomfield Avenue, West Hartford, [www.jhsgh.org](http://www.jhsgh.org)

I’ve seen many budding 5<sup>th</sup> grade fashion designers working on sketches at X-block! John Meyer of Norwich created a timeless, color coordinated brand that was well-known to many women in the 1960s. A visit to this exhibit will allow your budding fashionista to learn about history through one of his/her favorite mediums.

5) **Thames River Heritage Park Water Taxi,** New London and Groton,

[www.thamesriverheritagepark.org](http://www.thamesriverheritagepark.org)

Many students have shown an interest in military and maritime history this year. A new heritage park in Groton/New London has a water taxi that brings visitors from site to site.

Students can visit Fort Trumbull State Park (a popular choice for our State Park map!), Fort Griswold State Park, and the Submarine Force Museum through the water taxi experience.

6) **Greenwich Maritime History Exhibit at Greenwich Historical Society**, 39

Strickland Road, Cos Cob, [www.greewichhistory.org](http://www.greewichhistory.org)

On your way to New York City? This exhibit might be an enjoyable rest stop. Students learned about the importance of seafaring and whaling through our Northeast Unit and Mystic Seaport trip, and this exhibit will highlight the role the sea played in a community at the other end of Connecticut.

7) **Noah Webster House**, West Hartford, <https://www.noahwebsterhouse.org/>

Many 5<sup>th</sup> graders are never without a book in hand. Noah Webster, the innovator of the American dictionary, is a perfect topic of interest for students who love words, literature, and early American history. There's even a Colonial America Kid's Adventure Camp for students who are interested in in-depth historical role-playing!

8) **Ancient Burying Ground Tours**, Main and Gold Streets, Hartford.

<http://theancientburyingground.org/>

Few topics interest kids more than graveyards and ghost stories. This Hartford cemetery is THE oldest historic site in the city, boasting a gravestone from 1648. Your cemetery investigation can focus on a variety of themes, from common first and last names to epitaphs to the tools and materials used to make gravestones over time. You can arrange for a free tour of the Ancient Burying Ground by contacting [abgtours@gmail.com](mailto:abgtours@gmail.com)

9) **Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art**, 600 Main Street, Hartford,

<https://thewadsworth.org/>

On a rainy or unbearably hot day, seek respite in the sprawling Wadsworth. This museum has a vast collection of paintings and sculptures from Europe and the U.S. The Renaissance and medieval collections provide an excellent preview for some of the themes in art students will learn about in Grade 7.

10) **Roseland Cottage**, 556 Route 169, Woodstock,

<http://www.historicnewengland.org/historic-properties/homes/roseland-cottage>

A dollhouse come to life! This Gothic Revival home and panterre garden is a treat to tour. In addition, the Cottage hosts numerous special events over the summer. There will be free guided garden tours on June 26<sup>th</sup> and a Midsummer's Fairy Tea Party on June 24<sup>th</sup>!